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## Oakland Equitable Recovery Fellows

Concept Note

*Partnership between FUSE Corps and City of Oakland*

### PROJECT CONTEXT

Cities and counties across America are facing simultaneous crises across economic, political, health, and social systems in large part exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. History has shown that local governments are capable of repairing and rebuilding after crises, however, these actions have often fallen short of ensuring recoveries are inclusive. This current crisis provides a unique moment of opportunity for local governments to address the structural inequities that permeate their core institutions of housing, health, economic development, public safety, and criminal justice.

As a mission driven nonprofit, FUSE Corps is dedicated to supporting our city and county partners in all aspects of COVID-19 response and recovery, ensuring that they emerge from this crisis as more resilient and equitable places for all residents. Currently, FUSE fellows are on the frontline of local government, helping to mobilize a wide array of emergency response strategies. In partnership with our host agencies, FUSE fellows are restructuring hospital operations to manage COVID-19 infected patients; supporting small businesses; conducting community engagement programs with vulnerable populations, such as seniors, the homeless, and immigrants; overhauling programming and operations to run on a virtual basis; and supporting justice-related needs of those trapped in the suspended legal system - among other initiatives.

To progress and expand upon these response efforts, FUSE Corps is partnering with philanthropies to sponsor Equitable Recovery Teams across the country. These teams of 5+ fellows in each of the participating governments will focus on various elements of equity-based recovery, accelerating progress in issue areas such as living-wage jobs and small business support, homelessness and affordable housing, healthcare access, justice reform, education and childcare.

FUSE seeks to partner with the City of Oakland to embed an Equitable Recovery Team that will support leadership in redoubling efforts to close the equity gaps exacerbated by the pandemic and facilitate needed public safety reforms. At the end of the two-year fellowship program, the City of Oakland will have made substantial advancements in racial equity and will be on the path to sustain a resilient recovery from the pandemic.

### PROJECT SUMMARIES & POTENTIAL DELIVERABLES

*The following provides a general overview of the proposed fellowship project. This project summary and the potential deliverables that follow will be collaboratively revisited by the host agency, the Fellow, and FUSE staff during the first few months of the project, after which a revised scope of work will be developed and agreed upon by the Fellow and the host agency.*

Starting in Fall 2020, it is proposed that seven Equitable Recovery Team fellows will embark on their unique projects within the city of Oakland. Each project will have been developed in close collaborations with city and departmental leadership to ensure that innovative solutions are



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implemented and that transformational change is achieved by the end of the fellowship period. Fellows will be professionals with an average of 20-years of leadership experience, who have skills and competencies that will enable them to understand the specific context of Oakland's racial, social, and economic landscape and to effectively address fundamental elements of justice and equity within Oakland's government institutions.

Below are proposed projects that were identified to align with the key equitable recovery principles of the City of Oakland:

**1) Advancing Racial Justice and Public Safety Reforms.** Reporting to the *Director for Violence Prevention* and the *Interim Assistant City Administrator*, the FUSE executive fellow will facilitate efforts to test and learn from new approaches to reimagine public safety, such as mobile response units, under the City of Oakland's newly formed Reimagining Public Safety Taskforce (more information [here](#)). Through inclusive engagement, this fellow will help create a system to scale and resource successful violence prevention approaches that increase public safety without reliance on traditional law enforcement.

**2) Establishing a Public Health Partnerships to Reduce Racial Disparities.** Reporting to the *Director for Human Services* and the Mayor's Deputy Chief of Staff, the FUSE executive fellow will work closely with the Racial Disparities Task Force and Alameda County Department of Public Health Emergency Operations Centers. The fellow will build internal capacity at the city and county to maintain a unified approach to addressing inequities and integrating this work into other standing programs and initiatives, as well as the overall COVID-19 recovery process. Once coordination systems are in place in Oakland, the fellow will support the County in creating stronger collaborative systems with other jurisdictions.

**3) Implementation of Oakland's Economic Recovery Plan.** Reporting to the *Director for Economic and Workforce Development*, the FUSE Fellow will integrate COVID-19 and economic recovery efforts into a framework used to secure new partnerships and pilot equitable approaches to economic empowerment, such as universal basic income. This will include partnering with philanthropies and establishing public-private sector partnerships to achieve Oakland's equitable economic recovery goals. As more federal and state resources become available to support economic recovery, the fellow will help ensure Oakland is poised to leverage these opportunities. This will likely involve using data analysis to define and pursue opportunities; and coordinating agencies around proposals and new programs.

**4) Closing the Digital Divide.** Reporting to the *Mayor's Office*, the FUSE executive fellow will assist with implementing the Mayor's broadband equity initiative. In addition to providing project management leadership, the fellow will work closely with Oakland's Chief Technology Officer supporting ongoing broadband work; as well as the Economic and Workforce Development Department and its efforts to bridge the digital divide for businesses to ensure a holistic and inclusive approach to this challenge.

**5) Establishing a City-wide Strategic Performance Management System.** Reporting to the *City Administrator's Office*, the FUSE executive fellow will help build and pilot a strategic performance management system for the City that both utilizes existing data, as well as creates new mechanisms for tracking, analyzing, and measuring performance and outcomes (including racial equity



outcomes) across city departments and other key stakeholders. This type of system has become increasingly urgent as agencies work together to drive equitable community outcomes. Oakland recently adopted the Equitable Climate Action Plan (ECAP) which centers a Racial Equity Implementation Guide to measure outcomes, and received the state's Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) grant, which will be a catalytic opportunity to design and deploy a new system to support performance management and data analytics, as numerous city departments and community organizations are involved in implementation. The fellow will also help build both the departmental and community organization's capacity in data tracking and performance management.

**6) Designing a Public-Facing Tool for Adaptive Community Plans.** Reporting to the *Director for Planning and Building and the Chief Resilience Officer*, the FUSE executive fellow will help design and implement systems for ensuring that place-based plans (such as community-led action plans and city specific plans) can adapt to rapidly changing conditions in the community caused by COVID-19, climate change, racial inequities, and other socio-economic conditions. The fellow will create the framework, (inclusive of structure, means, and methods) for integrating stakeholder perspectives in real-time and adapting project implementation to evolving conditions on the ground. Examples of such plans include: Black New Deal, Equitable Climate Action Plan, Healthy Development Guidelines, West Oakland Community Action Plan; East Oakland Neighborhood Initiative.

**7) Equitable Access to High-Quality Jobs.** As part of Oakland's Workforce Development Board team, the FUSE executive fellow would launch strategic partnerships to ensure Oakland residents have more access to high-quality jobs; specifically, full-time, salaried positions with benefits, opportunities for advancement and safe working conditions. Reporting to the Workforce Development Director, the FUSE executive fellow would analyze the regional job market and identify barriers to access that could include gaps in available training/educational programs, alignment between programs and employer needs, and user-friendly resources. After identifying local needs, the FUSE executive fellow would work across stakeholder groups (employers, K-12 systems, higher education, community groups, etc.) to design and launch new programs that help Oakland residents access the strongest available job opportunities in the region.

**8) Designing Equitable Community Engagement** Reporting to the *Director of Race and Equity and the Communications Director*, the fellow will be responsible for supporting a city-wide working team to develop inclusive engagement and outreach engagement best practices to promote racial equity outcomes.

In addition, current FUSE Fellows with projects concluding in September 2020, would be extended to continue their work on equitable development and bridging educational divides across the city.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- **Libby Schaaf**, *Mayor*
- **Ed Reiskin**, *City Administrator*
- **Alexandria McBride**, *Chief Resilience Officer*



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- **Sara Bedford**, *Director – Department of Human Services*
  - **Guillermo Cespedes**, *Director – Department of Violence Prevention*
  - **Alexa Jeffress**, *Director – Department Economic and Workforce Development*
  - **William Gilchrist**, *Director – Department of Planning and Building*
  - **Darlene Flynn**, *Director – Department of Race and Equity*

## **PARTNERSHIP PROCESS**

With Mayor Schaaf and Department Directors behind the Equitable Recovery Team concept, FUSE will explore opportunities with various funding partners to 100% philanthropically underwrite the projects. Once funding is secured, and projects fully scoped with relevant leadership, FUSE will conduct an executive search, interview, and onboarding process for fellows. After philanthropic funding is secured, it will probably take 3-4 months for the fellow to start.